

Washington, DC — Today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) read into the Congressional Record a statement honoring the life and career of former Drexel University President Dr. Constantine Papadakis. (Full text of the Congressman's statement that appears in the Congressional Record is below). Speaking on the floor of the House of Representatives, the Congressman praised the life and work of the visionary leader who helped further Drexel University's development into the vibrant academic center that it is today.

Full Text of Congressman Sestak's Remarks Read into the Congressional Record

Madam Speaker,

I rise today to honor a true visionary, a world class intellect and a leader of the first order, Dr. Constantine Papadakis. The passing of this extraordinary man has left a void that extends beyond the Philadelphia region to all corners of our nation and his beloved birth country, Greece.

Dr. Constantine Papadakis served for fourteen years as President of Drexel University. This tenure ranked him among the longest serving leaders in higher education today. Under Dr. Papadakis' direction, Drexel's total enrollment grew by more than 130 percent to 21,000 and full time undergraduates enrollment increased to more than 11,000 students. Dr. Papadakis led the effort to create the Drexel University College of Medicine, Drexel University Earle Mack School of Law, Drexel Online, and the Center for Graduate Studies in Sacramento, California. He also formed a partnership between Drexel University and the Pennsylvania Institute of Technology, an intellectual outreach initiative that will help untold numbers of young men and women realize their full potential. The Pennsylvania Institute of Technology's new scholarship program for Veterans of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan is another testament to the Papadakis legacy.

Beyond academia, Dr. Constantine Papadakis was a champion of local economic development. He helped create Select Greater Philadelphia. He was a founding member of the World Trade Center of Greater Philadelphia. He also served on the Schuylkill River Development Corporation Board.

During his tenure at Drexel University, Dr. Papadakis had the opportunity to meet with various foreign dignitaries. In 1997, Jiang Zemin, then-president of the People's Republic of China, visited Drexel University where his son had earned his Ph.D. Dr. Papadakis also had a private audience with Pope John Paul II in Rome during the canonization of St. Katherine Drexel, niece of University founder Anthony J. Drexel. More recently, Drexel University was host to the October 2007 Democratic Presidential campaign debate.

Dr. Constantine Papadakis was born in Athens in 1946 and did not arrive in the United States until 1969. Since his arrival as a student, he has received more than one hundred and fifty major awards and honors. In addition to these, Dr. Papadakis acknowledged that the greatest achievements of his life were his marriage of 39 years to the love of his life, Elina, and the birth of his bright and talented daughter, Maria, a 2008 Drexel graduate.

I ask that our chamber and our nation pause to acknowledge Dr. Constantine Papadakis, a master of business, engineering and academia who in every sense lived the American Dream and created the conditions for untold thousands of others to do so as well.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.